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ABSTRACT

A paradigm is presented for preparing teachers to develop a broader knowledge and perspective of African American history and culture. The approach was designed to instruct nonminority elementary preservice teachers to begin to acquire the knowledge and understanding of critical aspects of the African-Afro-American history and culture necessary to teach minority and majority students. After determining that 67 teacher candidates in the author's class actually knew little about African History and culture, an educational study timeline based on key events and cultural elements was developed to help define the continuum of the African and African American experience. Culturally relevant materials were identified and students were required to become familiar with multicultural education resources in educational research literature and children's literature. Evaluation through a posttest indicated that students learned about black history and culture and were better prepared to teach. Eight figures illustrate the discussion and present the timeline. A bibliography of 13 resources is included. (Contains 26 references.) (SLD)

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ED 375 211

WHAT DO TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BLACK EXPERIENCE BEFORE THEY TEACH?
AN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTINUUM: SELECTED RESEARCH EXPERIENCES TO PREPARE PRESERVICE TEACHERS TO TEACH THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

For almost 400 years, African Americans have been an integral part of the development of this nation. Other than the native peoples who were the first inhabitants of this continent, Africans were among the first peoples who were part of the early settlements on the continent. African Americans have made vital contributions to this country, while struggling against all odds, slavery, racism and discrimination. Over the years, African American contributions and the culture and history of African Americans have been denigrated, misrepresented, omitted, and repressed from the general education of American society.

Due to this past neglect of the history of African Americans, there have also been many difficulties in preparing teachers to effectively teach African-American history and culture because of the limited number of course offerings, materials and resources available as well as the resistance to promulgating positive knowledge about African-Afro-American history and culture. Thus, researchers have indicated that teachers lack the background cultural knowledge and skills necessary to teach minority students, (Asante,1991b; Banks,1970,1987; Hale-Benson, 1982; Irvine, 1990, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1991). The breadth and scope of teacher education students' knowledge of the African American experience must be expanded, so that all teachers who will be part of the teaching force that will be teaching both African American and European American students in the 21st century will have pedagogical skills and a knowledge base that will enable teachers to be culturally responsive to students (Irvine, 1990, 1992). .

A paradigm for preparing preservice teachers to develop a broader knowledge and perspective of African American history and culture will be described in this paper. The author designed this approach to instruct non-minority elementary preservice teachers that had limited knowledge in this area to begin to acquire knowledge and understanding of specific critical aspects of the African-Afro-

American history and culture. Although the educational approach in this paper will address the African American experience it can also be applied to the acquisition of knowledge of other ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups. This paradigm was developed by the author from the point of view that a teacher must have enough in depth knowledge of one particular cultural, ethnic or linguistic group to be able to effectively teach this knowledge to his or her students.

Rationale

The student enrollment in most undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs largely consists white, female students (NCES, 1990; Goodlad, 1990). Most non-minority undergraduate students in preservice teacher education programs usually do not have very much background knowledge of minority cultures and they may also have many misconceptions and biased attitudes toward minority students. They need to gain sufficient academic knowledge through research, reading and clinical experiences that will enable them to teach minority group experiences to all students (Garibaldi, Gollnick, Irvine, 1992;Irvine,1990). Gollnick (1992) states that ..."while the provision of education that is multicultural is critical in culturally diverse communities, it is also important that students in communities with little cultural diversity learn that the nation's history and experiences are not theirs alone" (p.63).

The curriculum content of teacher education programs must be redesigned to include opportunities for examining the elementary and secondary school curriculum that basically decenters African American students emotionally, psychologically and socially (Asante, 1991a;1991b). In addition, teacher education students must gain knowledge of the learning styles of African American children and the appropriate ways to communicate verbally and non-verbally with students that will result in positive effects on the academic achievement of black students (Irvine, 1990).

Many state boards of education now require competencies in educational equity for teacher certification. The Massachusetts state board of education teacher certification standards for educational equity (1993) include the following:

> Standard III: Instructional Practice Standard: ...Competencies in instruction should include an ability to teach through diverse modes (including new technologies) reading and language arts as appropriate to the age, learning style and developmental stage of the learner; and to make **curricular content relevant to the experiences of the students from diverse racial, socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds**.
>
> Standard VI: Equity standard: The effective provisional teacher deals equitably and responsibily with all learners. **He or she understands the impact of western and non-western civilizations on contemporary American culture and uses this knowledge to develop appropriate teaching strategies.** (pp.15,16)

Ideally, all students should have academic course work which provides them with this background knowledge. In reality, due to the time constraints, lack of course offerings, and course loads, most students do not have the opportunity to include in depth course work for addressing the teaching of the African American experience nor other minority ethnic group such as Native, Hispanic or Asian Americans. Multicultural education courses which try to encompass all the various ethnic groups can only provide superficial study of the many ethnic groups that helped to form this nation. Most students also do not have the opportunity to include several courses on ethnic history and culture in their program of study, unless they are anthropology, history or sociology majors.

An additional problem that faces practicing teachers is that so little attention is placed on Africa and African American history and culture in school textbooks. If this information is not presented in the textbooks,then teachers need to supplement these texts with outside resources and/or trade books. Futhermore, unbiased, historically accurate trade books have only become more readily available for use in the elementary and secondary schools in the last thirty years. Given the limited number of unbiased, culturally accurate resources that are available, it is vitally important that teachers have accurate background knowledge of the black and minority experiences, so that they will be able to select and develop appropriate and culturally relevant learning experiences, resources and materials for their students.

<u>African American Curriculum Goals for Teacher Education</u>

Three critical goals for teacher education programs to consider in the development and inclusion of African American history and culture in the teacher education curriculum and the preparation of culturally responsive teachers are (1) students must acquire sufficient knowledge to teach the African American experience, through more in depth research and study of African and African American culture and historical experiences. (2) students must have opportunities to study the theoretical and empirical knowledge that supports the need for a culturally responsive approach to teaching minority students, in particular African American students; (3) teachers must also gain knowledge of appropriate pedagogical techniques as well as culturally appropriate resources to use in planning, organizing and implementing lessons that will result in their students' positive academic achievement.

Methodology and Approach

One of the first steps that I took to begin the process was to conduct an informal assessment of the prior knowledge that my students already had about African American history and culture. This assessment was conducted in three

undergraduate classes that I taught during the spring and fall 1993 semesters which consisted of a total of 67 white, middle class students. During specific class sessions of my course on children's literature, social studies and language arts, I asked my students to respond and discuss several basic questions such as: when did the ancestors of African Americans begin to arrive in north America? What was the status of these first Africans who were brought to the English colonies? Where did these people come from? What kind of culture did these people have in Africa? The students' answers varied in response to the questions concerning the time of arrival and the origins of the Africans that were brought to America, from 1700 to 1850. Most of the students were unsure of specific locations in Africa where the ancestors of African americans originated. None of the students were able to respond to questions concerning when the institution and abolishment of slave laws occurred. In contrast, when the class discussed the early colonial history of America, they all knew when, where and why the Pilgrims arrived in Massachusetts. Based on their limited responses to the informal assessment, it was evident that they had insufficient knowledge of the black experience to be able to teach this academic content effectively.

Selection of the Content and Curriculum Materials

Besides the teacher education students' general lack of knowledge of the African American experience, certain considerations guided my selection of those aspects of African American history and culture that would be emphasized in the paradigm for preparing the preservice teachers to teach the African American experience. Many historians, cultural anthropologists and art historians have produced historical and empirical evidence of the African heritage for African-American culture, (DuBois, 1939; Herskovits,1938). Other researchers have stressed the significance of linking this original culture to African-American culture for the purposes of empowering African-American students, establishing their cultural identity and to improving their academic performance (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Educators and historians such as Milton Herskovits (1938), and Carter Woodson (1933) and others have stated that building knowledge African-American culture and history should begin with a consideration of the African cultural antecedents. African -American students need to know the leaders, writers, scientists, artists and art forms to empower them with positive self-concept & identity (Irvine, 1990; Campbell & Wirtenberg, 1980; Yee & Furth, 1973). Non-African American students need to also know the African American heritage to build bridges of understanding between different cultural groups (Spears-Bunton, 1990).

The only way to achieve these goals is through an infusion of African and African-American culture and history into the school curriculum (Nobles, 1989) The only way that this will occur is that teachers must have knowledge of this historical background. Therefore, the design of the educational study timeline was based on selected key events and or cultural elements that can help to define the continuum of the African and African American experience and provide a framework for infusing this information into the school curriculum.

Building A Knowledge Base

I organized five steps to improve my teacher education students' knowledge of the African American experience: (1) Study and review of the research literature on the effects of the use of culturally relevant books and learning materials on black and minority students' academic achievement; (2) discussion and examination of recently published children's literature that reflects an unbiased, accurate portrayal of the African American culture, history and experience; (3) observation and discussion of primary source materials, films and slides depicting African and the African American culture and history; (4) discussion and review of the educational study timeline with related references including books and professional journals; and (5) required course assignments for the development of curriculum units and lessons plans pertaining to the African American experience, culture and history.

Review of the effects of culturally relevant materials

The process for building a knowledge base began with readings and discussion of the effects of books and curriculum materials on the self esteem and academic achievement of minority or AHANA students, which included books for african, hispanic, asian and native american cultural groups. We reviewed significance of the use of these materials, in particular, the presentation of positive images and experiences which can provide a more empowering cultural perpective for these groups of students. We reviewed how the school curriculum can be changed so that an Anglo or Eurocentric view does not dominate the school curriculum. We considered several examples of children's books and other learning materials such as videos, films and slides that can present positive, empowering images and information for minority students. The students read and discussed several journal articles that focused on the research which stated that the use of children's books with positive images of black and minority people improves the attitudes of both black and white students (Campbell & Wirtenberg, 1980; Yee & Furth, 1973).

It was also important for the students to understand how to examine and identify books and learning materials that are non-racist, non- sexist and bias free. The students received copies of The Council on Interracial Books for Children (1974) publication: 10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism In addition, the students were required to became familiarized with the journals and educational references through which they can access current information about multicultural education, ethnic studies and bias free children's literature. Professional publications such as the Social Education, The Reading Teacher and Language Arts provide bibliographies of bias-free, multicultural children's books and materials to support a culturally relevant classroom environment. The teacher education students also had an opportunity to examine several examples of bias free multicultural books for different minority groups. We discussed specific areas of the school curriculum wherein multicultural books could be used for

reading aloud to students, storytelling and individual reading. The social studies curriculum, in particular, can be enhanced through the use of multicultural biographies, historical fiction and non-fiction books. Then, I directed the students to selected references pertaining to the effects of the curriculum and children's books on the African American students' academic achievement as listed below:

Teacher Research Literature

Asante, M. (1991b). Afrocentric curriculum. Educational Leadership, 48(4) 28-31

Campbell, P. R. & Wirtenberg, J. How books influence children: What the research shows. Bulletin (Council on Interracial Books for Children) 11(6).

Spears-Bunton, L. (1990). Welcome to my house: African American and European American students' responses to Virginia Hamilton's House of Dies Drear. Journal of Negro Education, 59 (4) Howard University Press, 566-576.

Yee, A.H. & Fruth, M.J. (1973, Winter). Do black studies make a difference in ghetto children's achievement and attitudes? The Journal of Negro Education 42: 33-38.

We reviewed the concepts of positive self concept and identity and the significance of the curriculum in promoting students' self awareness and cultural identity. We discussed how the school curriculum has often only provided a Eurocentric view and how this has affected black and minority children. Issues such as the "hidden curriculum" and teacher/student interactions and teacher expectations were reviewed as well. It was critical for the students to understand how their behaviors as well as the materials and curriculum activities that they present can affect their students' self concept. But equally important was the consideration of the issues of prejudice, racism, sexism. We reviewed the meaning of these concepts and how these attitudes affect all of our lives.

The African American Historical and Cultural Continuum Timeline

To give the students a chronological framework for understanding the African American experience and to structure their reading and research, I disseminated the educational study timeline. The development of the educational timeline was the result of my analysis of selected cultural and historical materials and references (Bascom, 1986; Davidson, 1965, 1980; DuBois, 1947; Fage, 1978; Franklin, 1980; Herskovits, 1938; Williams, 1883). The historical/cultural timeline presents a continuum of significant events and aspects of the African and African American cultural experience suggested by the historical references. It focused on the specific areas of knowledge that my preservice teacher education students did not know. It seeks to answer questions such as: Where did the ancestors of most African-Americans come from? What was the history and culture of these peoples before they were brought to the Americas as slaves? What was the impact of slavery on the culture of these peoples? How can we present the African-American experience within the context of the history and culture of the larger American society?

The timeline included those highlights of the African and African American experience that can be easily correlated with specific topics in the elementary and secondary school language arts, social studies, science and arts curricula and connected to teaching resources such as children's literature. I had utilized a variation of this approach for inservice workshops that I conducted for experienced teachers in the public schools (Brown, 1988). I found through my experience working with practitioners in classrooms, that incapsulating this information in a chronological framework provided a broad overview for teachers who lacked an academic background in African American history and culture. The broad outline provided reference points as well as a structure for planning learning experiences for elementary and secondary students. I believed that this approach would also be appropriate for instructing preservice teachers as well.

Developing a Knowledge Base Through The Educational Timeline

The first part of the educational timeline outlines key benchmarks of the ancient history, culture, customs, art, folklore and lifestyles of the West African peoples that were enslaved and brought to the North American continent. The second and third parts of the timeline provide a chronological overview of key events in the African American experience:1619-1863 and 1863 to the present. We reviewed the timelines as a whole to gain a broad overview of the continuum of African American history from its roots in Africa to the present.

As we reviewed and discussed the timeline continuum, emphasis was placed on the significant benchmarks that answered some of the questions that had been asked previously such as: the location of the major slave trade centers on the West African coast; the various ethnic groups that were largely tapped for the slave trade; the initial entry point for slaves in English colonial America at Jamestown,Virginia in 1619; the status of the captured Africans as indentured servants, prior 1660; and how the imposition of slave codes on these people impacted their African heritage and culture. Although the European slave trade had commenced before 1619 in the Spanish colonies, I decided to put the study of the African American experience within the historical context of the history of the English colonies because more emphasis is placed on this historical context in the elementary and secondary schools and understanding the black experience at that time would enable the students to integrate this content into the curriculum. .

As suggested by Carter Woodson (1933,1969), African American culture and history should be an integral part of all aspects of the educational process. Therefore,the educational time line provided the dual dimension of learning experiences across the curriculum for elementary and secondary students, with selected examples of appropriate books, resources and learning materials that

illustrate key historical and cultural events. The use of these books and materials can develop knowledge and concepts through reading, language arts, science, music and art. The list of children's books on the timeline is by no means exhaustive, but these books present selected examples for the key events and topics listed on timeline.

Understanding the role of Blacks in early America is an important perspective for these students to learn, especially, the integral role of Blacks in early colonial America as artisans, farmers and craftsmen. At the same time, it is also important for them to understand where the early enslaved Africans came from and what their cultures were like prior to their enslavement. To further elaborate on the African heritage, I presented slides of artifacts and art objects such as: the brass and bronze sculptures of Benin and the gold ornaments of the Ashanti; the ceremonies of the Obas in Nigeria and the Ashantene in Ghana which represented aspects of the social, cultural and historical background of African peoples.

The students also examined several books that could be used to develop an understanding of the African American experience in colonial America, such as: Amos Fortune, Free Man; Black People Who Made the West; Black Foremothers; Black Heroes of the American Revolution; and Tituba of Salem Village. We reviewed the content of some of these books and discussed ways in which the books could be used to integrate this information in various subject areas in the school curriculum for grades 4-12. Wiedner (1964) provided a excellent series of maps which illustrated the West African slave trade routes between West Africa and the Americas that shifted over three centuries; the maps clearly depict the origins of the West African peoples that were enslaved in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (see figures 4-6). It was critical for students to have the geographic perspective as they studied the various time periods.

Figure 1

AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTINUUM

The African Past

900 B.C. -- 1600 A.D.

West African Empires | **West African Ethnic Groups**

Centers of the slave trade

900 B.C.	200 A.D.	1000A.D.	1600 A.D.
Nok culture (900 B.C. -200 A.D.)		Akan, Ashanti, Yoruba, (Oyo)	[Ghana, Nigeria]
Ghana (800-1000 A.D.)		Fanti, Ewe, Ga, Ibo,	[Benin (Dahomey), Nigeria]
Mali (1100-1400 A.D.)		Wolof, Mande, Serei	[Senegal, Gambia, Mali]
Songhai (1400-1600 A.D.)		**Ancestors of African -Americans**	

Rulers & Leaders: Askia the Great; Mansa Musa; Sunni Ali; Osei Tutu; the Ashantehene(Ghana) & the Oba(Nigeria)

STUDY UNITS

West African Folktales & storytelling: Ananzi tales, Tonga tales; Pourquoi (Why?) stories (K-3)

Art: Kente cloth weaving; tye dye; bronze and terra cotta sculpture, architecture (Museum visits) (4-12)

Music: appreciation of the drum and string instruments - centerpieces of African music: (Guest Artists) (4-12)

Geography of West Africa: Savanna, rainforest, river deltas (4-12)

Science, commerce & industry: , gold & salt sahara trade; iron making ; Lost wax process for making bronze and brass - (slides, films and videos) (4-12)

Figure 1 continued

The African Past
Elementary and Secondary Literature

K-4

Ellis, V. F. (1989). Afro-Bets First Book About Africa. Orange, New Jersey: Just Us Books.
McDermott, G (1972). Anansi the spider: A Tale from the Ashanti. New York: H. Holt.
Musgrove, M. (1976). Ashanti to Zulu: African traditions. New York: Dial.
Aardema, V. (1975). Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. New York: Dial Press.
.Greenfield, E. (1977). Africa Dream. New York: Harper & Row

4-6

Barker, C. (1985). A Family in Nigeria. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications.
Steptoe, J. (1987). Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.
Yarbrough, C. (1979) Cornrows. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc.
Clifton, L. (1973) All Us Come Across the Water. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

6-12

Glubok, S. (1965). The Art of Africa. New York: Harper.
Hintz, M. (1987). Enchantment of the World: Ghana. Chicago: Children's Press.
Levy, P. (1993). Cultures of the World: Nigeria. New York: Marshall Cavendish.
Zemba, L.V. (1988). Ghana in Pictures. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publication Co.

Figure 2

AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTINUUM
The American Past

I. The Black experience & culture in the north & south (1619-1863)

Colonial period | **The New Nation** | **Westward Expansion**

Atlantic Slave Trade — Slave trade ends — Emancipation Proclamation

1619 | 1776 | 1790 | 1808 | 1863

[Slave codes] — [slaves 3/5 of person] — Dred Scott case

Cotton, Rice, Indigo plantations — Abolitionist movement — Underground railroad

Black insurrections — Blacks in American Revolution — Blacks in the West

Study Units

Southern African American Folktales (K-12)
Biographies of African Americans (3-12)
Historical fiction/ Nonfiction period books on timeline topics (4-12)
Geography of the Americas, Africa and Europe and American eastern seaboard (4-12)

Famous Black Americans in the Arts, Science & Education

Benjamin Banneker, Crispus Attucks, Peter Salem, Phyllis Wheatly, Salem Poor, Peter Salem, Paul Cuffe, Denmark Vesey, Norbert Rillieux, Nat Turner, Dred Scott, Frances Ellen Watkins, James Beckwourth, Jean Baptiste DuSable, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Anthony Burns, Dred Scott; William & Ellen Craft

Figure 2 continued

The American Past
The Black experience & culture in the north & south (1619-1863)

Elementary and Secondary Literature

4-6

Davis, B. (1976). Black heroes of the american revolution. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Petry, A. (1964) Tituba of Salem village New York: Crowell.

Hamilton, V. (1985). The people could fly. New York: Knopf.

Hamilton, V. (1988) Anthony Burns: The defeat and triumph of a fugutive slave New York: Knopf

San Souci, R. (1989) The talking eggs. New York: Dial.

6-12

Ferris, Go free or die, a story of Harriet Tubman.

Hamilton, V. (1968). The house Of dies drear. New York: Macmillan

Katz, W. L. (1977) Black people who made The old west. New York: Thomas Y Crowell.

Meltzer, M. (1984) The black americans: A history in their own words. New York:Crowell

Patterson, (1965) Frederick Douglass: Freedom fighter. New York: Garland Press.

Rinaldi, A. (1991) A wolf by the ears. New York: Scholastic Books.

Sterling, D. (1988) Black foremothers New York: Feminist Press.

Yates, E. (1967). Amos Fortune, Free Man. Dutton: New York.

Figure 3

The American Past
II. The Black Experience & Culture in the North & South (1863 - present)

Reconstruction **Contemporary Afro-American Life**

13th-15th amendments Jim Crow Laws / segregation civil rights movement

| 1863 | 1900 | 1920 | 1941 | 1954 | 1963 | 1964 | present

DuBois v.Washington Harlem Renaissance World War II Brown decision Civil Rights Act

Blacks in arts, science, the military and education

Study Units

Southern African American Folktales (K-12)
Biographies of African Americans (3-12)
Historical fiction/ Nonfiction period books on timeline topics (4-12)
Geography of the Americas, Africa and Europe and American eastern seaboard (4-12)

Famous Black Americans in the Arts, Science & Education

Nat Love, Edmonia Lewis, Blanche K. Bruce, P.B.S.Pinchback, Ida B. Wells, Lewis Latimer, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Matthew Henson, Dr. George Washington Carver, Garrett Morgan, Carter Woodson, Dr. Charles Drew, Mary McLeod Bethune, Mary ChurchTerrell, W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson, Justice Thurgood Marshall, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Andrew Young.

Figure 3 continued

The American Past
The Black Experience & Culture in the North & South (1863 - present)

Elementary-Secondary Literature

K-3

Clifton, L. (1983) Everett Anderson's Goodbye. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Greenfield, E. (1973) Rosa Parks. New York: Crowell.

Keats, E.J. (1962) A snowy day New York:Viking.

Keats, E. J. (1965) John Henry: An American legend. New York: Pantheon.

Mathis, S.B. (1975) Hundred penny box. New York:Viking.

4-6

Clayton, E. (1969) Martin Luther King:The Peaceful Warrior. New York: Archway.

Greenfield, E. (1977) Mary McLeod Bethune. New York: Crowell.

Hamilton, V. (1972) W.E.B. DuBois: A biography. New York: Crowell

Taylor, M. (1975). Song of the trees. New York: Dial.

6-12

Adoff, A. (1970). Malcolm X. New York:Crowell.

Hamilton, V. (1967). Zeeley. New York: Macmillan.

Myers, W. (1979). The young landlords. New York: Viking.

Taylor, M. (1976). Roll of thunder, hear my cry. New York: Dial

Taylor, M. (1981). Let the circle be unbroken. New York: Dial.

Teacher Education Students' Research

The examination and analysis of children's books also provided a structure for the introduction to the African American history and culture for preservice teachers that lacked basic knowledge of the African American experience. Through discussion and examination of recently published children's literature that reflects an unbiased, accurate portrayal of the African American culture, history and experience the students became more familiarized with the black experience. Nonfiction books ,in particular, provided the overview in conjunction with the timeline of African American experience. These books included Ellis's Afro-Bets First Book About Africa (1989); Musgrove's Ashanti to Zulu (1976); Katz's Black People Who Made the West (1977). The students were referred to the other titles on the timeline for individual reading and review such as: Meltzer's The Black Americans: A History in Their Own Words (1984).

As the children's books were reviewed, the students simultaneously considered pedagogical approaches for organizing skills development for elementary students in the areas of language arts, reading, science, mathematics and the arts. For instance, the students examine several copies of African and African American folktales such as: McDermott's Ananzi the Spider,(1972); Steptoe's Mufaro's Beautiful daughters, (1987); Hamilton's The People Could Fly, (1985) that could also be used for storytelling, reading aloud and dramatization in the elementary classrooms. We considered nonfiction trade books that focused on the geography and culture of several west African countries and discussed how these books could be used to build elementary geography skills. At the same time, teacher education students developed a better understanding the geography of modern West Africa.

Biographies of famous Americans can provided insight into the circumstances and lifestyles of many African Americans of the time period. This study should also include African American women as well as free blacks that made significant

contributions during the slavery era. Often the role of black women is not addressed. Books such as Sterling's Black Foremothers (1988) present important academic content for understanding women's contributions.

The historical fiction books, such as: Hamilton's The House of Dies Drear, (1968) and Anthony Burns (1988) can provide insight into the circumstances of black protest against slavery through the system of the underground railroad; how Blacks fought back against the system of slavery and sought freedom at all cost. The fictional books written by African American authors provided insights into the special nuances of being black in America. In particular, Mildred Taylor's stories such as Song of the Trees (1975) and Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (1976) can be an important window for teacher education students of the 1990's to understand the experiences of black Americans under Jim Crow laws of the 1930's. The themes of these books can then be related to the historical events indicated on the timeline.

Translating the Knowledge Base into the School Curriculum

Once, the students had acquired basic accurate information about the black experience through the children's books, then they could use the timeline as a guide for educational and historical research to continue to augment their basic knowledge and perspectives. Another resource that students were referred to included non-racist and non-sexist resources such as films, videos, tapes that could also be incorporated into the study of the black experience. We also discussed visiting museums and using museum slides of art objects and artifacts which can be another valuable resource for building background knowledge.
The students were required to develop lessons and study units that would illustrate a multicultural perspective on our nation's history. The timeline also served as a research guide for further research and reading when student teachers developed the required curriculum units and lessons to include some aspect of the African American experience in their curriculum planning.

Outcomes

The students' required course work, examination question (figure 8), classroom discussion and participation were evaluated to determine how their knowledge base had improved. Through observations of the student teaching practicum as well as an analysis of the examination responses and classroom discussions, I determine that the more exposure to historically accurate, unbiased and culturally relevant materials the students the more likely that they were able to develop and implement classroom lessons for students.

All of the students demonstrated their acquisition of knowledge through the examinations and classroom discussions. During classroom discussions, students often expressed surprise at the information we reviewed, for instance, most of the students were not aware that 10-20 million Africans were brought to the Americas over the course of four centuries. That black protest was as extensive as it was and that it occurred in a variety of ways such as insurrections and the underground railroad . They did not know that there were many black cowboys in the old west. Classroom discussions also revealed many stereotyped images that the students had of African Americans because of their lack of accurate information.

Responses to the examination question varied to the extent to which the students utilized the information from the timeline. Many of the students chose to respond to the question pertaining to African American history and culture relative to the time period of 1619-1863. Some referred to the status of blacks as slaves during this period, and the effects of slavery, racism and discrimination on the lives of African Americans. The responses were not as extensive as I had hoped they would be, but I believe that a critical step was taken in improving these students knowledge of the black experience. Many of these students have not begun the student teaching practicum. Further assessment of the application of their knowledge will be obtained in the future semesters.

Summary and Conclusions

African American history and culture is an integral part of the heritage and culture of the American nation. However, this vital component of the development of this nation has been omitted, distorted and misrepresented in the past. Although, in recent years, there has been improvement in the content, resources, methods and materials that can be used to teach the Black experience in America, much more needs to be done so that the teaching of African American culture and history includes the wider scope of the historical and cultural antecedents from Africa and the reshaping of that culture in the Americas. In order to accomplish this goal, the content of teacher education programs needs to be addressed to facilitate preservice teachers' preparation to teach the African American experience in the schools.

What Do Teachers Need to Know about the Black Experience Before They Teach?

- They need to know the theory and knowledge base for culturally responsive pedagogy;

- They need to how to help African American students become psychologically, emotionally and socially centered through a culturally relevant school curriculum;

- They need to know essential elements of African American history and culture to be able to plan, develop and implement classroom activities that will inform and empower students;

- They need to have a clear historical perspective on African American experience in order to fully integrate this experience across the curriculum in all subject areas;

- They need to know the multidimensional aspects of the African American experience across gender and class;

- They need to know the impact of African American culture and history on the American society;

Recommendations

More approaches are needed in teacher education programs that will incorporate in depth study of particular cultural groups such as African Americans into the teacher preparation program. The results of this study indicate that teachers need more clinical opportunities to apply academic content related to the African American experience in classrooms. The outcomes would seem to indicate that the approach taken in this study was a key step, but additional coursework and study should be undertaken by the students. The most appropriate preparation would require that teacher education students take at least 6-9 semester credits in ethnic studies, multicultural education and/or liberal arts courses in American and African history and anthropology. The African American experience should also be more thoroughly included in textbooks and courses in American history, so that students will have this knowledge as part of their general education.

There is a need to survey teacher education programs across the nation to determine how these programs are preparing teachers to teach the black experience. Students prior knowledge should be assessed when they enter a teacher preparation program to determine their background knowledge of all ethnic and ethnic minority groups. Then teacher preparation programs must provide for experiences that help these students to integrate academic knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of the needs of minority students. These perspective teachers should have course work experiences that allows sufficient time for study of the historical, anthropological and cultural antecedents of different cultural groups. One way to incorporate this study is to integrate academic knowledge into the methodology and other educational courses that students are required to take. For instance, using children's literature as suggested by this study to build knowledge of a particular cultural group. Follow up studies of beginning teachers would indicate how well the programs that are presently in place are preparing the students for the long range practice.

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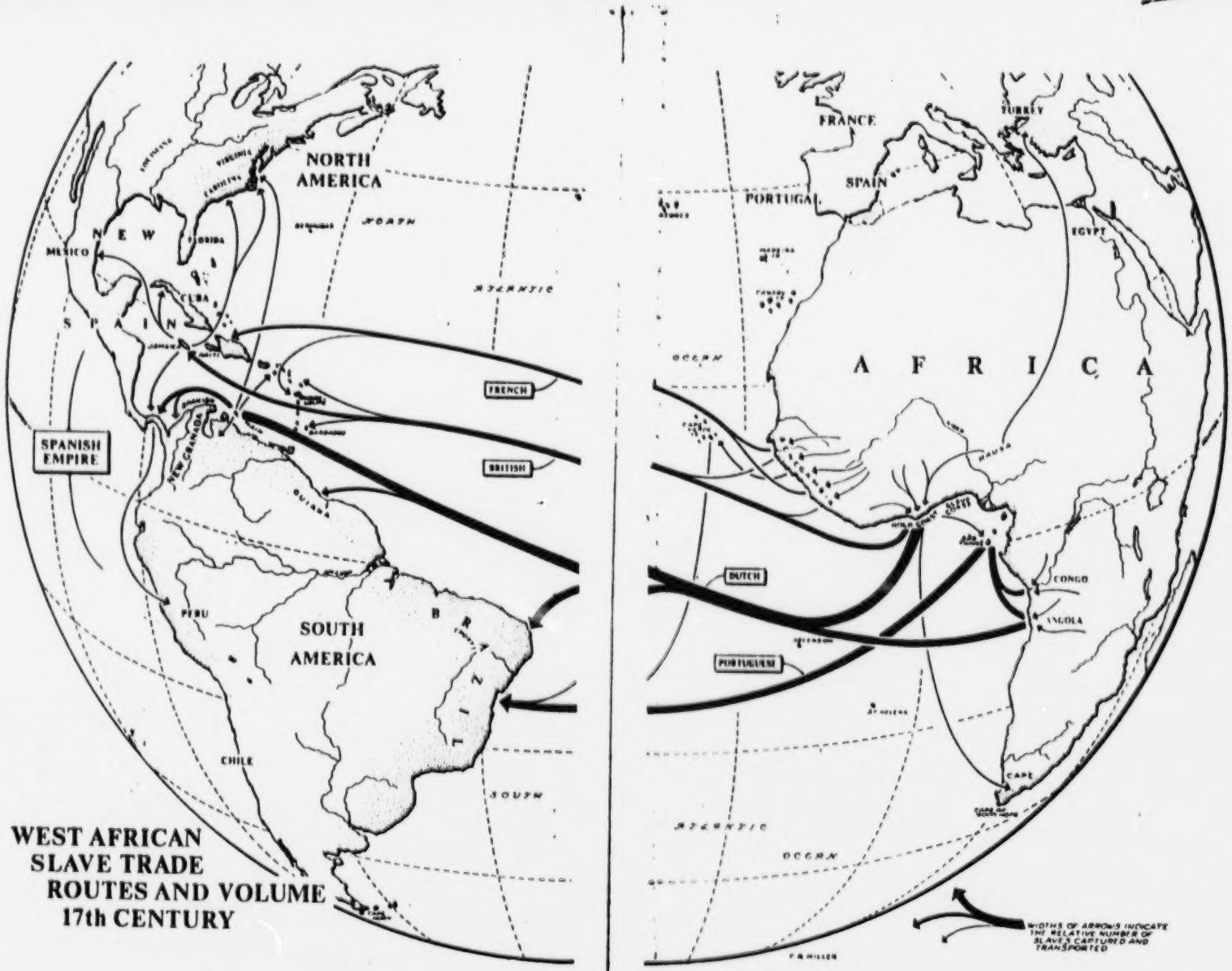

WEST AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE ROUTES AND VOLUME 17th CENTURY

Figure 4

Wiedner, D.L. A History of Africa South of the Sahara.

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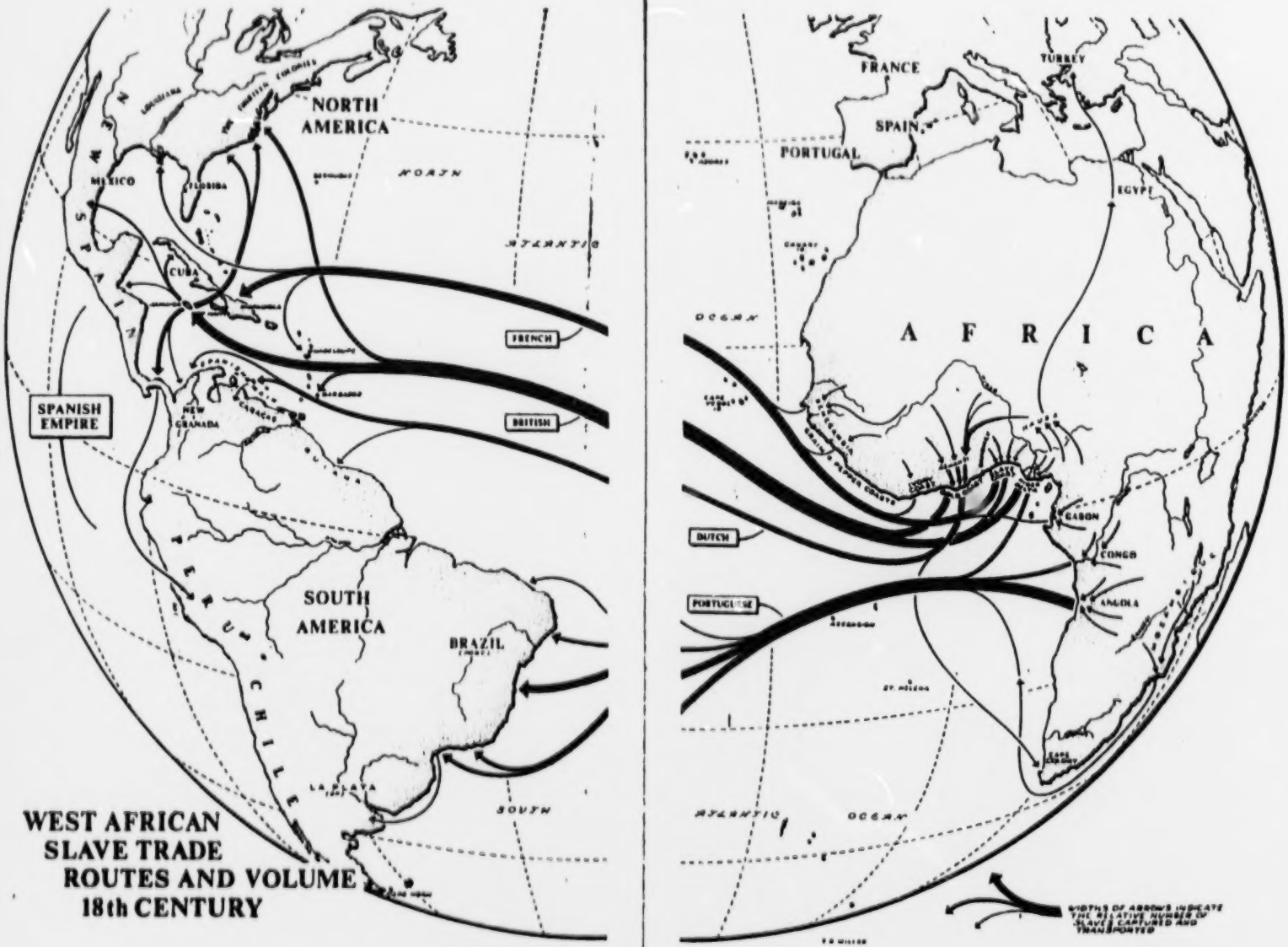

WEST AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE ROUTES AND VOLUME 18th CENTURY

Figure 5

Wiedner, D.L. A History of Africa: South of the Sahara.

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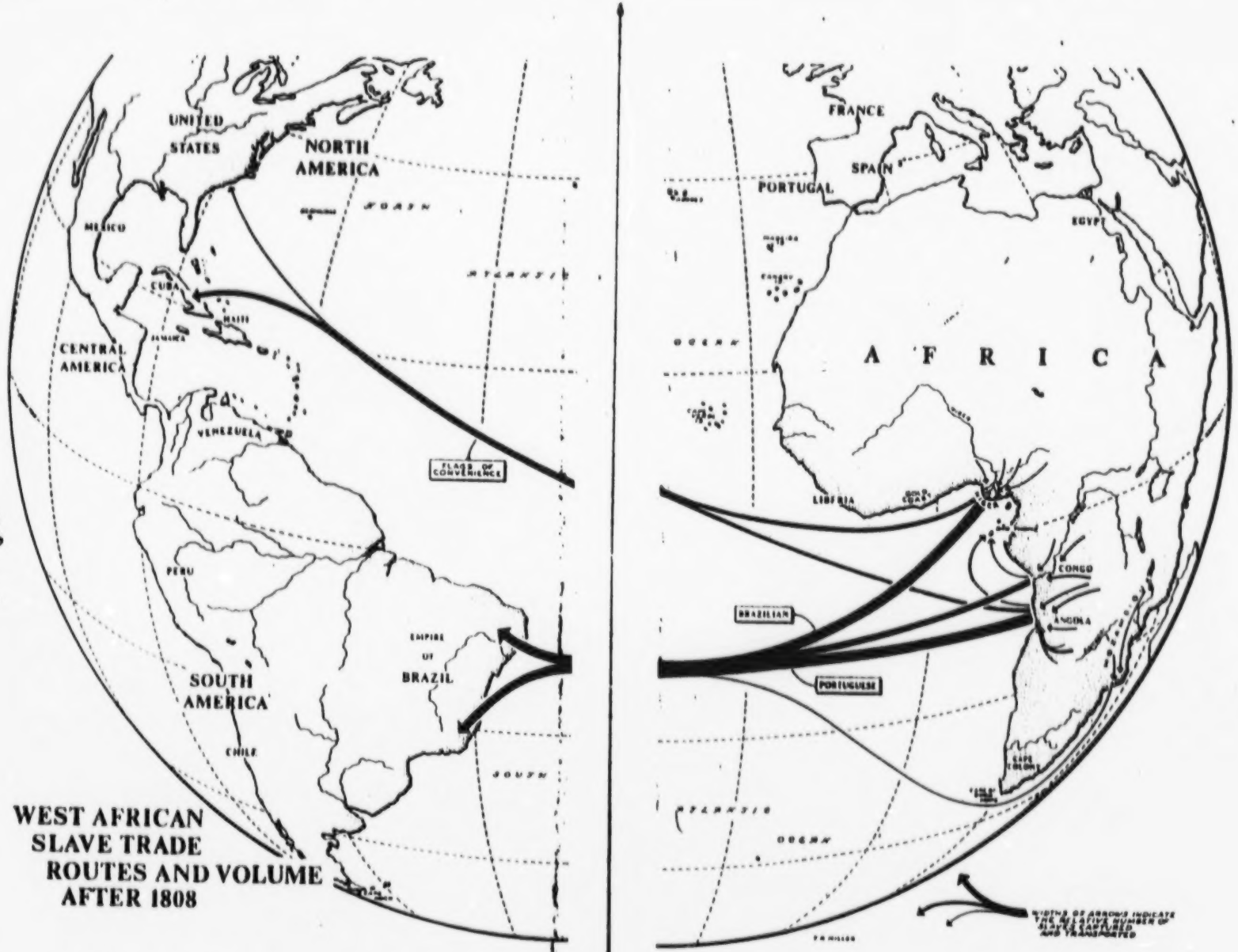

WEST AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE ROUTES AND VOLUME AFTER 1808

Figure 6

D.L. Wiedner, A History of Africa: South of the Sahara

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COPY OF LETTER OF CATO FREEMAN

Being about to remove from the family where I have for some time resided, would, with the greatest respect I am capable of, to the heads of each family respectively take my leave. I desire therefore, to return my hearty and unfeined thanks for your care over me, your kindness to me. Also for your timely checks, your faithful reproofs, necessary corrections, your wise council, reasonable advice, for your early endeavprs, being yet young and my tender mind, to frame it in such a manner as to lay a foundation for my present and future happiness. And also by the blessing of heaven, I hope your endeavors have, nor will not be fruitless. Being unable to make a compensation to the author or instruments of the advantages I have been favored with equal to them, I hope while in life to do all I can to promote the glory of the former, and the welfare of the latter. I hope you not only having the name but the disposition of Christians and wishing to have your own imperfections overlooked will I trust, do the same by me.

Some of the family being now in the decline of life, and according to the course of nature have but a few days to spend here, will erelong, I trust, be in the enjoyment of that facility, which will be a full compensation for your kindness to me and to others. Whose departure hereby many that survive will be greatly missed but while you tabernacle in the flesh, I would beg a remembrance of me in your addresses to the throne of grave. My present wish is that the blessings of heaven may attend each family and all their lawful undertakings, also their children to the latest generation. And I hopo that myself shall be enabled with the rest to live in such a manner. I being madc meet may be admitted with you into that haven of rest where there is no distinction. Yours with respect.

Cato--May 24th
1789

Copied from original
March 1960 CLR

Figure 7

North Andover Historical Society
Archives
North Andover, Massachusetts

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 8

ED 322 - Elementary School Teaching: Language Arts, Social Studiesand Children's Literature

EXAMINATION QUESTION

The population of the United States is composed of many different ethnic, racial, cultural and religious groups. National demographics indicate that the diversity of this nation will continue to increase into the 21st century. Cultural diversity is an especially critical issue to address in the schools, given the racial, ethnic and cultural conflicts that often occur there. The social studies curriculum can be a vehicle for addressing this issue and improving cross cultural awareness and respect. Using this perspective as a framework:

I. Explain how you would develop an interdisciplinary unit on a particular cultural, racial or ethnic group or a comparative study of more than one group during a particular time period of our history. A. Specify a grade level and state a specific cultural, racial or ethnic group and the time period. B. Develop concepts such as: culture, cultural universals, cultural &ethnic heritage. Note specific examples of the resources you would use to develop the concepts such as: literature, art, music, the creative arts, architecture, material culture and/or museum artifacts.

II. Indicate how you would integrate reading, writing, children's literature, especially biography and historical fiction, social studies content from history, geography, sociology & anthropology into the unit of study to help students gain a better understanding of the cultural diversity of our nation and reduce racism and elitism.

III. State how you might use cooperative learning to focus on the concepts to be developed in the study unit. Indicate some *inquiry* activities that students might participate in using community resources.